Met Office

NEWS

Conditions turning colder later in the week

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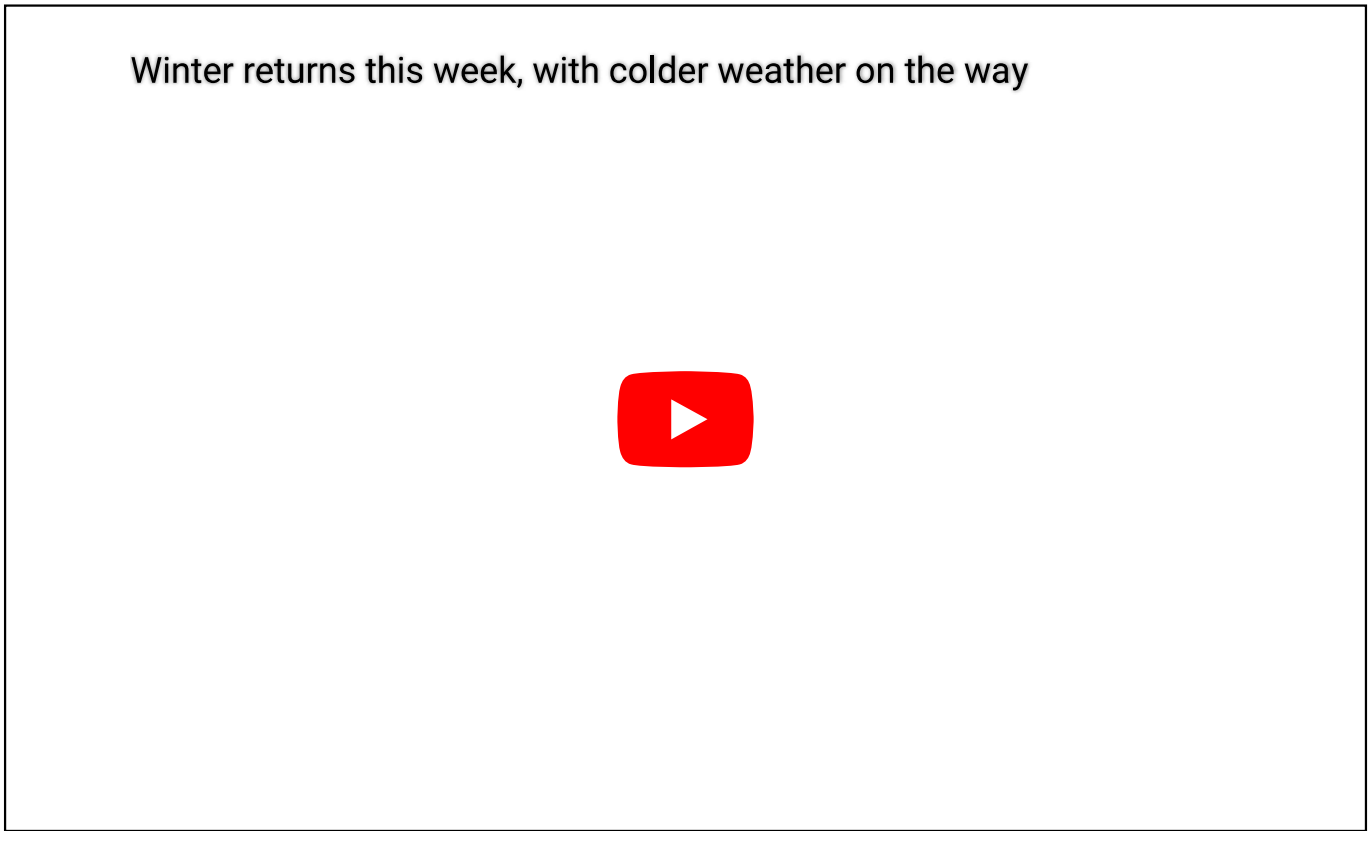
After a mild start to the week, conditions will get colder later in the week with wind chill playing a key part in the south.

The UK will start the week in a small sector of mild air with temperatures as high as 14°C in some parts of the west. These milder conditions will be short lived though as high pressure begins to dominate by the middle of the week, eventually allowing an easterly flow to bring in cold air from Eastern Europe over the weekend.

Chief Meteorologist Andy Page, said: "High pressure will become established across the UK by the middle of this week bringing settled weather for most, but also some frosty nights. However, as the high drifts east to be over Scandinavia by the weekend, it will allow colder air from Eastern Europe to be drawn towards us. The cold easterly wind will bring an element of wind chill which will make it feel colder in the south."



There are signs that this cold spell is likely to last well into next week with possibly even colder air from Russia moving across the UK. Although there is a very low risk of snow this week because of the dry nature of the air, this

could change the other side of the weekend.

Dr Thomas Waite, of Public Health England's Extreme Events team, said: "With the days feeling a little longer and lighter it can be easy to forget that cold weather can still kill.

"Over 65s, those with conditions like heart and lung diseases and young children, are all at particular risk in cold weather as their bodies struggle to cope when temperatures fall. So before it gets cold check on friends, family and neighbours, who may be at risk and make sure they're heating homes to at least 18C, see if they need any particular help or just someone to talk to and keep an eye on the Met Office's forecasts and warnings. Remember keeping warm will help keep you well."

The incursion of these cold conditions is linked to a meteorological event that has happened high up in the Stratosphere over the North Pole. A Sudden Stratospheric Warming (SSW) event occurred last week which after a lag period can have implications to our weather in Northern Europe.

Prof Adam Scaife, of the Met Office Hadley Centre, explained: "Signs of this event appeared in forecasts from late January and last week we saw a dramatic rise in air temperature of around 50°C, known as a Sudden Stratospheric Warming, at around 30km above the North Pole. This warming results from a breakdown of the usual high-altitude westerly winds and it often leads to a switch in our weather: with cold easterly conditions more likely to dominate subsequent UK weather."

These events are well reproduced and can be predicted in our computer models. There are signs that the recent Sudden Stratospheric Warming above the North Pole could lead to prolonged cold conditions over the UK that could last into March.

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